THE

Puritan Conspiracy

AGAINST

THE PILGRIM FATHERS

AND THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

1624.

By John A. Goodwin.

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"A people which takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors, will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered with pride by remote descendants." — *Macaulay, Hist. England.*

"The founders of dynasties have hitherto commanded the world's most noisy plaudits; but the time will come, when the men who have created happy republics, will be thought worthy of higher praise." — *Palfrey, Hist. of New England.*

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TO THE

Honorable Alexander H. Rice,

WHO,

AMID ARDUOUS MERCANTILE CARES, COMBINED WITH LONG AND FAITHFUL SERVICE IN THE COUNCILS OF THE NATION,

AND IN THAT HIGH POSITION WHICH COMBINES THE OFFICES OF

WILLIAM BRADFORD AND JOHN WINTHROP,

AND WHILE SERVING WITH EQUAL ZEAL

A church where sits a bishop,
"And a state without a king,"

HAS FOUND TIME FOR LOVING VISITS TO

The Graves of the Pilgrim Fathers,

FOR THE ADORNMENT OF THEIR ANCIENT HOME AND THE PUBLIC COMMEMORATION OF THEIR VIRTUES,

These Pages are Respectfully Dedicated.

" Truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations." — *Gen. xlviii. 19.*

" The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength." — *Gen. xlix. 23, 24.*

" ' Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.' And Jesus said unto him — ' Forbid him not: for he that is not against us, is for us.' " — *Luke ix. 49, 50.*

INTRODUCTION.

UNDER James I, the English Protestants were of three classes, — the Conformists, or High Ritualists; the Nonconformists, or Puritans; the Separatists, generally called "Brownists." The Conformists adopted all the rites and pageantry then retained by the Church of England, and asked for more rather than less. The Puritans, while refusing conformity to some of these ceremonies which they thought superstitious, adhered firmly to the same body, claiming it as the only true church, and defending its creed, polity, and discipline with a zeal quite equal to that of the dominant Conformists. The thorough-going Separatists denied that the state church was a Christian body, or that its ministrations and ordinances were of any validity. They claimed their own little congregations to be the only really Christian churches; and these bodies, absolutely independent even of one another, they held to owe no ecclesiastical obedience to any person, council, or other authority, between the majority of the members and the Divine Head.

The Conformists included the King and the authorities of the church, who exercised lawless and tyrannical powers with remorseless vigor. The Puritans had control of the House of Commons, and were strong in literary and mercantile circles, as well as with the gentry and the middle classes generally. They hoped to finally gain control of the Church of England; and they were therefore the more zealous that its revenues, powers, and unity should be unimpaired. They counted among their leaders, Henry, Prince of Wales; and but for his early death (1612), it is believed that, in 1625, the Church of England would have become a Puritan body, much in sentiment like rigid Low-Churchmen of to-day. With a Puritan Henry IX, it is not probable that there would have been a Commonwealth, a Revolution, or a Brunswick succession; and it is certain that the effect on New England colonization would have been most unfavorable.

The Conformist oligarchy fitfully persecuted the Puritans, but with steady cruelty pursued the "Brownists." The Puritans joined in harassing the latter (whom their House of Commons had previously voted to banish under penalty of death); and now so traduced them to the continental Protestants, that, in

their foreign refuges, the Separatist exiles received none of the sympathy and assistance so readily bestowed on fugitive Puritans. Very few Puritans, and those the more aggressive preachers, were driven from their country. The great body remained at home, hopeful of a change, and full of animosity against the "Brownists" as enemies of the true church.

The Pilgrim Fathers, while in England, had been of the Separatist class, but in Holland they had followed John Robinson into Independency, so that they have been called Semi-separatists. They came to regard the Church of England, and the Presbyterian, Lutheran, Dutch Calvinist, and Huguenot bodies, all as branches of the church of Christ, to welcome godly members of them to their sacramental table, and to hold baptism by any of these orders as valid and sufficient. In short, the rigid Separatists declared for or against a man according to his church; and the Independents judged him, not by his name and affiliation, but by his individual piety.

In 1620, Thomas Weston, of London, as a business venture, formed a stock company of some seventy Adventurers, for the purpose of planting the Pilgrims in America, and for seven years sharing the profits of the plantation. These Adventurers, like nearly all the mercantile people of England, were of Puritan proclivities;* and they seem, on gathering from Weston that the Pilgrims were not of the despised "Brownists," to have hastily inferred that they were in some degree inclined to Episcopal ways.† During the colony's first year, the Adventurers apparently found that, unlike themselves, the Pilgrims were not Puritans, and thereupon they took measures to prevent the emigration of Pastor Robinson or his leading associates.

The spies of the malcontent Puritan Adventurers soon notified them that a great many the people of Plymouth were not members of the Pilgrim church, and were ready for a different order of things. Some of the Puritan clergy ("namly, ye forward preachers") ‡ who had a great "hank" over the Adventurers, began to think that the new colony would grow into an eligible place for themselves. This feeling, joined to the religious zeal of the other members, induced an effort to overthrow the Independent (or Congregational) rule already established at Plymouth Rock, and to substitute some measure of the Church of England practices. This great Puritan Conspiracy of 1624, is the subject of the following pages.

* Bradford's Hist. Plym., 197, sect. 3 — "our church," *i. e.* Ch. of England.

† Bradford's Hist. Plym., 197, lines 11–19; also, sect. 2.

‡ Bradford's Hist. Plym., 166. Do., 157, 5th line, etc.

[All uncredited quotations in the following pages are from Bradford.]

THE PURITAN CONSPIRACY.

In 1623, there came in the Anne, to Plymouth, Master John Oldham with his wife and eight other persons, not to unite with the colonists, but for security to live as near as might be permitted, while managing their affairs in their own way. The colonists were "generals"; these people were "particulars." The Pilgrims, however, kindly gave the new-comers an invitation to live in their village, and share equally in its advantages, which was accepted. Oldham was an uneducated man and a blusterer, but he had native ability, and the social position indicated by the title of "Master." It is probable that the malcontent Adventurers had sent him to aid in organizing against the Congregational (or Independent) rule, the elements of disaffection which Robert Hicks and others had secretly reported to exist in strength.

During the ensuing winter, some slight show of discontent was caused by Oldham's counsels, but it was at once ended by Bradford's offer to change any one who wished, from a "general" to a "particular." This ended the trouble, for the petitioners had small desire for a change if they were free to make it. Still, a small faction was kept together by Oldham's assurance that a strong section of the Adventurers would see that no more supplies reached the colony, and would soon place the "particulars" in full power. It was therefore with much surprise that, in March (1624), they saw the ship Charity arrive, bringing Winslow home with ample supplies, a stock of neat cattle (of which there had before been none), a shipwright, and a salt-maker. She also brought a series of complaints, made by some returned "particulars," and Bradford was called upon to answer them. They were briefly as follows: —

There was much religious controversy in the colony; family exercises on Sunday were neglected; both sacraments were disused; children were not catechised, or even taught to read; the water was not wholesome; the ground was barren, and would not bear grass; the climate was such that salt would not preserve fish, and there was hardly a fish

or wild fowl to be found; thieves abounded, and so did wolves and foxes; the Dutch were intruding on the trade; and, finally, the people were much troubled with mosquitoes!

When the ship returned, some months later, Bradford sent his reply, which was a mixture of gravity and satire:—

From the beginning, down, there had been known no controversy, public or private, on religious matters; any neglect of family duties on the Lord's day would be rebuked, if known; that they were deprived of their pastor and his ministration of the sacraments, was grievous, for when with him, they had the communion every Sunday; the children generally were taught in private families, and the colony desired at once to begin a "common school," for which a teacher and due support had been heretofore lacking; the water was "as good as any in the world," though not like the beer and wine of London which the grumblers "so dearly love"; in England was no such grass, and the cattle were already "fatt as need be," and would there were one animal for each hundred the grass would keep; the matter of fish was too absurd, in view of the great fishing-fleet which visited the coast every year; sundry thieves who had come in there, had "smarted well for it," but if London had reared no thieves, none of them would have got over to trouble this colony; foxes and wolves were in many good countries, but poison and traps would thin them; if the Dutch with commendable energy were getting a strong hold now, they would get Plymouth too, if the plantation should be broken up; and, finally, men who could not endure the biting of a mosquito, were too delicate for founding colonies; but this pest was really no greater than in every new place, and in time would scarcely exist.

Soon after this arrival, Master Oldham went to the authorities with the confession that he had "done them wrong both by word and deed, and by writing into England." He had been assured that no further succor would be sent to the colony, but the large supplies by the Charity showed the "eminent hand of God" to be with them; his heart smote him, and those in England should no longer use him for their purposes; he begged that the past be forgotten, and himself regarded as one of them in all things. So generous was Oldham's forgiveness, that he was even invited to meet regularly with the governor's council of five. He was probably sincere at the time, and his co-operation restored universal harmony.

The Charity had also brought Master John Lyford, a Church-of-England preacher of the Puritan section, and also his wife and some four children. The plotting Adventurers had selected him as their agent. Winslow and Cushman, who knew nothing of him, had opposed his going, but finally yielded for the sake of peace, writing home that they thought him "an honest, plain man, though none of

the most eminent and rare." They had, however, arranged that he should have no pastoral position until the church should see fit to choose him to one. Of course, neither they nor their comrades ever dreamed of the conspiracy already on foot. So Lyford came at the colony's charge, and was not only housed, given an over-proportion of provisions, and provided with a servant, but, like Oldham and Elder Brewster, was invited to sit with the council. Lyford at once made his hosts ashamed —

"he so bowed and cringed unto them, and would have kissed their hands if they would have suffered him; yea, he wept and shed many tears, blessing God that had brought him to see their faces, and admiring the things they had done in their wants."

Soon he professed a conversion to Congregationalism, and making "a large confession of faith," he obtained membership in their church. He offered to altogether renounce his Episcopal ordination, and declared that he should consider himself no minister unless his new church should re-ordain him; but Elder Brewster caused him to stop forthwith, assuring him that the Pilgrim flock required no such thing of its members as that they separate from the Church of England, but only that they separate from the world, and leave church names to care for themselves.* Still, though Lyford was not permitted to repudiate his Episcopal calling, he continued to bewail the alleged corruptions with which he said it had entangled him, and which burdened his conscience; and he blessed God that he had now freedom to enjoy His ordinances in their purity among His people. Although not chosen pastor, he preached in turn with Elder Brewster, and all went very smoothly.

After some weeks, it was noticed that Lyford and Oldham were having much privacy with many of those not considered in sympathy with the church, and especially with the profane and less reputable *attachés* of the plantation, like John Billington; and that a faction was forming under their direction. As the Charity was about to go home, it was noticed that Lyford was writing a great number of letters, and in that connection was often whispering to his coarse, low followers, things which seemed to give them much secret amusement. With the disaffection already among the Adventurers, there would be very great danger to the colony if a new series of slanders should now be sent to England uncontradicted, and work its mischief for a whole

* "Neither require we of any of ours, in the confession of their faith, that they either renounce or in one word contest with the Church of England." — John Robinson; "Apology," 52.

year before it could be known at Plymouth, and refuted in the ordinary course of things. The case required the exercise of a power which in like danger has been, and still is, exercised by all governments; and the council decided that these mysterious letters must be examined. Capt. William Peirce, of the Charity, was an earnest friend to the colony and ready to co-operate.*

When the ship sailed, Bradford went in her, towing a boat for his return. Edward Winslow was on board, on his way to England as the colony's agent. Peirce having produced the letters, there were found to be more than twenty from Lyford, filled with malicious falsehood, in furtherance of a plan for the "ruin and utter subversion" of the colony. Oldham was a poor writer and had sent little; but some third person had notified a friend that Mr. Lyford and Mr. Oldham intended a reformation in church and commonwealth, and that so soon as the ship had gone, they would begin by forming a new congregation. Of most of these letters copies were taken, and the originals sent forward; but to prevent Lyford's denying the genuineness of the correspondence, some of the worst originals were retained, and true copies sent.

After Lyford and his family had embarked at Gravesend for America, Winslow had left in the cabin a letter from himself to Pastor Robinson, and one from an English friend to Elder Brewster. Lyford, already at work as a spy, had purloined these letters, copied them, and resealing them, had restored them to their place without discovery. The copies with "scurrilous and flouting annotations," he was now sending to his friend, John Pemberton, a Puritan minister, and the colony's "adversary." These papers were also taken for evidence. Having transacted this business, and left Winslow and Peirce to look after the case in England, Bradford returned in his boat. His errand had been suspected, and the conspirators expected to be called to account; but when weeks went by with no sign, they concluded that the governor had only made a parting call on his friend Peirce, and was still not only without any evidence of their conspiracy, but without any suspicion of it.

As they supposed their faction able to sway a majority of votes in town-meeting, they began in a skirmishing way to pick quarrels with the officers, and to show "great malignancy." Thus, Oldham, when civilly called to take his turn to watch, refused obedience to the captain, upon whom he drew a knife, calling him a "rascal," a "beggarly

* In 1776, the Committee of Safety, at Boston, opened all letters coming from Halifax, addressed to tory inhabitants. On one occasion, at least, they publicly announced the information as "by an intercepted letter."

rascal." The governor sending to have the noise stilled, Oldham "ramped more like a beast than a man, and called them all traitors and rebels, and other such foul language," says Bradford, "as I am ashamed to remember." But Oldham yielded when "clapt up" for a little while. He seems to have expected a popular demonstration in his favor, and to have found not one voice raised in his behalf. Next, the original plan was tried. On a Sunday, Lyford, ignoring the public worship, assembled his followers, and held a meeting under that ordination which he had so recently disclaimed and denounced in the public assembly. Pains seem to have been taken to make the schism especially offensive, with "insolent carriages," which are not described.

The sedition had broken out in the very way foretold in one of the letters, and it behooved the government to act for self-preservation, before the entering wedge should be followed by a second. A "court" of the whole company, or a town-meeting, was called. It probably was held in the fort-church on the hill, and little imagination is needed to picture the assembly: Bradford presides, with his council sitting by him on the platform; Standish acts as marshal, and as is done at the Sunday gatherings in that place, a quarter of the men come in military order, fully armed; a sentinel is kept day and night on the roof of the church, where the artillery is ranged behind a rampart, and his tread is heard in the intervals of business; some 80 men of the colony are present, with several full-grown lads and a few visiting strangers, of whom nothing is known to us; many of those present are full of wonder as to the object of the meeting, and some who know of it, like good Deacon Fuller, the surgeon, feel sure that Brother Lyford will set himself right; the governor is fearful as to the extent of the defection among the many voters outside the colony's church; and the arch-conspirators, counting on a majority, confident that there is no positive evidence of their plot, are bold and hopeful; throughout the meeting generally, there is a pent-up excitement, with a feverish anxiety as to the mysterious something about to take place.

In opening, Bradford in general terms charged Lyford and Oldham with plotting to destroy the government. They both made a square denial, and indignantly demanded his proof. They were referred to what had been publicly seen of their actions. Oldham was reminded that he had come, not as a colonist, but on his private account; yet he and his had been taken into the village, which they had not expected; and in trying to bring ruin on those who in his days of weakness had so kindly received him to their homes and councils, he was guilty of ingratitude as well as treachery. Lyford, with a large

family, had been brought over and maintained at the public expense, and by his own seeking he was in church-membership with them; for him to plot their ruin, was most perfidious.

The culprits supposing that Bradford had put in his whole case, were probably surprised that he had discovered nothing definite. Lyford then proceeded to renew his denial, declaring that he knew nothing of the colony's English enemies, or their plans, nor had he any relations whatever with them; and that he should be suspected of any collusion with them, filled him with astonishment. Then, for the first time, his letters were produced; and some having been read before the men who had so often heard in that place his prayers and sermons, he stood convicted of treachery, knavery, hypocrisy, and persistent lying. The sudden exposure overwhelmed him, and he became speechless. But Oldham's courage rose with the emergency, and he determined to try immediate conclusions with the government. Denouncing the opening of his letters and threatening revenge, he sought to rally his friends by imperiously shouting, "My masters, where are your hearts? Now show your courage! You have often complained to me, thus and so! Now is the time! If you will do anything, I will stand by you!" Many restless but not ill-meaning spirits had been flattered by the confidential manners of Oldham and Lyford; but now that the plot was unmasked, they recoiled. Others who would not have been unfavorable to a successful rebellion, had no inclination to a losing side. So when Oldham, at the close of his vehement call, stood before the assembly and glared at his recent associates, not one voice was raised in his favor. A dead silence was the effectual answer.

Bradford then demanded Lyford's opinion as to the propriety of opening the suspected letters. The culprit knew that the two copies he had surreptitiously made of Winslow's letters, must be in Bradford's package, and would condemn him if he should censure Bradford's act; so he remained silent. The governor then explained to the people the necessity of this seizure of correspondence, — that he might ward off the "mischief and ruin" which the "conspiracy" sought to bring on "this poor colony." He then caused one of his associates to read all the letters, and exhibit those in Lyford's hand; and also to show the manner in which Lyford had opened the letters of others. The public astonishment now increased.

These letters, in much detail, charged official wastefulness, negligence, caprice, and general mismanagement of the joint-stock interests. One accusation drew from Bradford a very interesting declaration, and one doubly important from the publicity with which it was

now made. Lyford had written that the church would have none remain in Plymouth but Separatists. Bradford denounced this assertion as "a false calumniation"; he called attention to the fact, that there were then present many citizens that were not Separatists and who were highly esteemed, the colony being "glad of their company" and desirous of receiving any like them. This statement, joined to Lyford's claim that the non-Separatists were in the majority, will give many readers a new idea of Pilgrim toleration. It is a curious fact, that Lyford charged the Plymouth authorities with discouraging the non-churchmembers from attending worship, even on Sunday, and with resenting his endeavor to get the people generally to attend the preaching. Bradford actually felt called upon to refute this, and to show that church-going was compulsory. The unfriends of the Pilgrim Fathers, in those days, generally inveighed against them as being lax themselves, and as shamefully neglecting to enforce religious observances and instruction on their associates and subordinates. It was little thought that two hundred and sixty years later, the self-same Pilgrims would be the subject of halting, shame-faced apology from their own descendants, as having exceeded their generation in rigidity of doctrine and severity of practice!

Lyford also urged his English principals to hurry over all the settlers they could; even servants should be made shareholders, at least in form; but Robinson and his people must be kept back, and for fear of their private embarkation, neither Winslow nor Peirce should longer go in the ship. Thus could he gain colonists enough to vote down and suppress the Congregational element. If a captain whom they had spoken of, should come over "as a general," — *i. e.* one of the general colonists, — he would be chosen commander; "for," said Lyford, "this Captain Standish looks like a silly boy, and is in utter contempt." (This passage may have caused a smile, but probably not on the face of the choleric little captain.) If these reinforcements did not come, Lyford and his friends must move to a place across the harbor, or fuse with the original settlers — *væ nobis!*

Lyford was then urged to produce any evidence, however slight, to sustain even the least of his charges; and he and his friends were offered every opportunity to do this, or to present any other complaint or grievance. They were reminded that all the men of the colony were present, and therefore any witnesses they could name, would at once appear. The governor desired that he and his associates should not be spared in any respect, if any one had anything to say against their conduct. The opportunity was full and free, and there were impartial strangers present to listen. But no one responded, until

Lyford, in a humble tone, began to say that certain complainants had abused his confidence and led him to misuse his real friends; and he accused Billington and others of deceiving him. These men earnestly denied his statements, and protested that he was wronging them; they had indeed been drawn into some of his meetings, but had refused their consent to his conspiracies. Probably Lyford was then beginning to tell the truth; but those whom he had taught to be false to their own brethren, were not the men to stand by him in his disgrace.

It was a fearful humiliation to the university-trained divine, when publicly denounced as a traitor and a liar by a vulgar brawler like Billington, to know that such men as Bradford and Brewster, Fuller and Warren, Standish, Howland, Alden, and Prence, all believed his low-lived accuser, whom they despised much less than they did himself. Bradford then summed up Lyford's knavery and hypocrisy, especially in religious matters, and fully set forth what had been proved in the case. Oldham had some conscience, but no shame. Lyford, technically a gentleman, though conscienceless, had a class pride; and as he stood, the focus of all eyes, so thoroughly convicted that not a voice uttered a word in his favor, the ignominy overwhelmed him. One may imagine the disgust of the stalwart Oldham, when his fellow-conspirator burst into tears, and began to bewail and confess to the meeting that his letters were "false and naught both for matter and manner"; that he feared he was a reprobate; that his sins were so great as to make him doubt of God's pardon; and that he was "unsavory salt."

The meeting quickly rendered its verdict, but it is not known whether there were any dissenting votes.* The sentence was, that Oldham be banished forthwith; but that his family might remain till he had a comfortable home for them. Lyford was to go at the end of six months; but it was really intended to pardon him, if his repentance should seem genuine. He promptly took occasion, before the church, to more fully confess his wrong-doing, shedding abundant tears, and charging himself with envy and malice towards his brethren; he said he had counted on the great body of the people to help him carry his points with violence, and God might justly charge him with shedding innocent blood, for he knew not what might have come, had not his writings been stayed, and he blessed God that they were stopped; God might justly make him a vagabond, like Cain. His effusive con-

* Roger Conant and other members of Oldham's company of "particulars," were not colonists, and therefore not voters in the town-meeting.

trition produced such a sentiment in his favor that he was permitted to resume preaching; and warm-hearted Deacon Fuller, and others, declared a readiness to sue on their knees for his pardon. The stormy sky became once more serene; but in a few weeks, from that clear sky there dropped a thunderbolt.

About September 1st, when that calamitous craft, the Little James, was ready to return to London, one of her company brought to the governor a letter which Lyford was seeking to forward by him. Self-preservation required an examination of this missive; and forthwith was revealed an astonishing depth of depravity. Lyford was now, with many professions of pious concern, assuring the malcontent Adventurers that his forgiving hosts at Plymouth were full of "indirect courses" and "injurious dealing" towards them, and were audacious to "darken ye truth" with "great pretenses" and equivocation in many things. "Ye church (as they call themselves)," though "ye smallest number in the colony," deprived the majority of the means of salvation, and held to no ministry for the conversion of the people generally, and poor souls were complaining of it with tears to him, and he was under censure for preaching to all comers. As to his former letters, which he had so often and so tearfully recanted and denounced before his congregation, he now said: —

"I suppose my letters, or at least the copies of them, are come to your hands, for so they here report; which if it be so, I pray you take notice of this, that I have written nothing but what is *certainly true!*"

Once more, the governor wrote a long defense of the colony, and sent it with the letter, as well as a full exposure of Lyford's acts. This last letter, of course, ended all thought of pardon; but another result of it was startling. Mrs. Lyford, a worthy matron, was so morbidly affected, that in her distraction she went to one of the deacons and made frightful revelations as to her husband's licentiousness, before and after marriage. While he was a suitor, she had a hint that he had contracted parental responsibilities, but he satisfied her scruples by taking an oath that he was not guilty; yet after marriage, the story not only proved true, but the child was brought to their home for support. And afterwards, her constant vigilance over her maid-servants had been required on his account, and had not always been effectual. She confirmed her statements before some other persons, and was overcome by the fear that a judgment was pursuing her on her husband's account. Lyford remained at Plymouth during the winter, probably living still from the public stores; he then joined Oldham, who was domiciled at Nantasket (Hull), where were some

straggling settlers. Strange to say, some of their former friends remained steadfast, and voluntarily removed with them. Among these was Roger Conant, who became the brave and worthy founder of Salem, and who seems, at this time, to have been so rigid against Separatists, that he could in preference condone Lyford's wickedness and accept his ministrations.

In March, 1625, Oldham, in defiance of his sentence, sailed into Plymouth with some strangers, and soon began to assail the people with such abusive language, that even his comrades rebuked him; but all reproofs were as "oyle to ye fire," and he went on in "his mad fury" denouncing the settlers as "a hundred rebels and traitors." The madman was committed until his senses had returned. Then he was led to his boat between two rows of musketeers, each as he passed expediting him by an ignominious "thump" with a gun; and at his embarkation they bade him "goe and mende his maners."

So thoroughly did Oldham absorb public attention, that no one noticed the arrival from England of the ship Jacob; and when Oldham was about running the gauntlet, Winslow landed with Master William Peirce, entirely unobserved until they appeared in the crowd. They soon made an addition to the excitement. On reaching London, the last summer, with their report of Lyford's acts, they had been violently assailed by his friends, who declared it a great scandal that "a minister, a man so godly," should be so aspersed; and a suit for slander was threatened. At length, a hearing was had before a meeting of the Adventurers, at which two moderators jointly presided, — Lyford's friends choosing Mr. White, a lawyer, and his opponents selecting Mr. Hooker, a preacher, both eminent men. The case attracted a crowd of outside partisans.

In the course of the meeting, Winslow, in some warmth, said that Lyford had "dealt knavishly." Upon that, Lyford's friends broke out, demanding that those present witness that Winslow had "cald a minister of ye gospell *knave*," and they would "prosecute law upon it." When the tumult had abated, Winslow called to the stand two strangers, who had been made known to him. They were from Lyford's Puritan parish in the English pale of Ireland. He was there guilty of an especially flagrant act, involving the betrayal of a young parishioner who was intending marriage with another of his flock, and his then promoting the union. The victim being driven by remorse to confession, Lyford fled in fear of retribution, and reached England in time to be picked up and sent to Plymouth by the Adventurers, who of course knew nothing of this transaction. These two "godly and grave" gentlemen having very modestly but clearly given the par-

ticulars, Lyford's friends became mute with shame. The moderators then joined in deciding that Lyford's conduct at Plymouth had fully justified his condemnation there; but what had now come to light, proved his unfitness for the ministry forever after, no matter what repentance he might express. The subject was then dismissed; but the ill-feeling not only survived, but caused the Adventurers to fall apart, so that the great majority wholly abandoned the colony's interests.

Not many months after Lyford's withdrawal to Nantasket, that worthy Puritan divine, White, at the English Dorchester, heard that the exiles had left Plymouth through some distaste of Separation. To Puritan prejudice, this seemed a quite sufficient recommendation. In 1623, White (through the Dorchester company) had caused fourteen of the fishermen to winter at Cape Ann (Gloucester); the next year (1624), he gave the place the character of a settlement; in 1625, he provided it with twelve neat cattle, and he invited Lyford to go there as pastor, Roger Conant as superintendent, and Oldham as overseer of trade. The first two went, but Oldham preferred trading on his own account. At the end of 1625, this plantation, which had sunk £3420, was abandoned. Conant, taking a few of the men and the outfit, then founded what is now Salem, Lyford going as their minister and serving as such until 1629. Some readers may be surprised to learn that for the first three years of its existence, that ancient town worshipped exclusively in the form of the Church of England, as also at that time did all the scattered settlers around Boston Bay.

Thus ended the great Puritan conspiracy against the church which the Pilgrims had planted with such heroic sacrifices, and watered with such sacred tears; and against that government which they had planted on the principle then novel among rulers, — the equality of all men before the law. Plymouth lost something by the withdrawal of a few men like Roger Conant, and by the enmity of the Adventurers; but she gained much more by the increased zeal of those who remained; for many who had hitherto stood aloof from her religious organization, felt called upon to rally to its defense and join in its membership; and all felt a new respect for their government, generally so mild, but which had proved so vigorous in the time of peril Thus came it, that this momentous year of 1624, closed on a scene of harmony which was long to continue.

What might have been, had Lyford's place been filled by some liberal, worthy churchman? It is hardly probable that Plymouth's ceremonials — her formal informality — had become very firmly fixed. It is certain that in Holland the Pilgrims had invited to their com-

munion all pious-minded Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Calvinists of various kinds, welcoming them as brethren of one great household; Robinson in his farewell remarks had suggested the employment of some Nonconformist minister by his people during his absence, and had advised them to seek union with the godly part of the English churchmen,—advice in which he was consistent, for it is recorded that he honored the godly ministers of the Church of England "above all other the professors of religion," for "his spirit cleaved unto them," and he urged "sweet communion" with them.* Already in Plymouth were many "not of the Separation," and, as Bradford records, the Pilgrims "were glad of their company." Might not such a congregation have slowly yielded in externals to a ministry of united wisdom, strength, love, and devotion? But unfortunately those ordinances

Note 1. Lyford (about 1629) went to a Virginia parish, and soon after died. His widow returned with her children to New England, where she was ever respected, and she seems to have been the Widow Ann Lyford, who, in 1641–2, was at Hingham, as wife of Edmund Hobart, and whose children, Ruth and Mordecai, then released some goods left by "their father, John."

Note 2. Oldham's after-life was exciting and tragic. Though Lyford went to Cape Ann, Oldham stayed at Nantasket, trading with the Indians, until, in 1626, he sailed for Virginia. At the Cape Cod shoals, the ship fell into such danger that destruction was imminent. The passengers fell to prayer, and to the confession to each other of such sins as most burdened them. Oldham made full acknowledgment of all the wrongs which he had done, or meant to do, to the people of Plymouth; as he had sought their ruin, he said, God had now met with him and might destroy him; yea, he feared they all were faring the worse for his sake; and he solemnly vowed to make amends, if God would forgive him. The vessel was saved, though turned back, and Oldham, strange to say, remembered his pledge. He treated the Plymouth people with "an honorable respect," and once more declared the hand of God to be with them. He received full permission to come and go, and when, in 1628, the colony sent a state-prisoner to England, they entrusted him and the evidence against him, to their friend Oldham, who then went over.

Oldham became a man of some note in the colony of Massachusetts Bay, and a member of its church, which, while "separating," vehemently disclaimed "Separation." He was a member of the first general court of magistrates and representatives which met at Boston, he being a "deputy" from Watertown. His chief employment was trading with the Narragansets, in connection with which he bought in their bay, of Canonicus, the beautiful island of one thousand acres, now called Prudence. Thereabouts, in 1634, Master William Peirce went with the Rebecca, to bring away five hundred bushels of corn which Oldham had accumulated; and while there he saw at least one thousand Indians.

In July, 1636, John Gallop, of Boston, while sailing home from the Connecticut, encountered Oldham's pinnace off Block Island, with her deck occupied by fourteen savages. Seeing that she had been captured, he determined to retake her. His crew consisted of his

* Edward Winslow, Chron. Pil., 389.

and methods which, in an unnatural alliance with the cruelty and rapacity of bailiffs, had only been known to the seniors in the long-ago, now became associated in every mind with Lyford's frauds, vices, and sacrilege.

There are those of us, yielding to none in loyalty to our ancestors, and feeling that, if we had been with them, we should have been of them, who regret the perversion of this opportunity to win them to perhaps some partial use of "that form of sound words," — a form Separatists were taught to regard as one of "stinted prayers" and "dumb reading," but which three centuries of churchmen have found so ample for devotion, so increasingly rich in associations, and so grateful in all the conditions of humanity. Yet our fathers' ways were sanctified to them. Judge them by their works, through which, though dead, they still live.

two young sons and a hired man. His fire-arms were two guns and two pistols, and for these he had only duck-shot. As he bore down, the savages stood ready to repel him with their stolen weapons, but his shot so galled them, that they all ran below. Then, arming his bow with his anchor, Gallop came on with all speed, and "rammed" the pinnace so violently, that six of the savages, terrified at this form of warfare, leaped into the sea and were drowned; another stroke, and four followed them. Then, ranging alongside, Gallop grappled an Indian, and tying him, put him in his own hold. Next was taken the frightened sachem, who was the chief murderer, and he was bound; but as Gallop did not dare to put him with the other prisoner (for they would have quickly released each other), he consulted safety by casting him into the sea.

The two surviving pirates remaining concealed in Oldham's hold, Gallop ventured on board, for he had seen a man's body in the stern-sheets, hidden under a seine. While his crew covered him with their fire-arms, he examined the body, which was still warm, though the head was cleft, and the hands and feet had been in process of amputation when the attack began. The head was too bloody for recognition, and Gallop proceeded to wash it. Soon he exclaimed, "Ah, Brother Oldham! Is it thou? I am resolved to avenge thy blood!"

Oldham, while peacefully trading, had been surprised and assassinated for the sake of plunder. His two Indian employes had betrayed him; and two boys, his kinsmen, who were with him, had been sent on shore as prisoners, but were eventually recovered through Roger Williams.

Oldham's body was buried in the sea, which had just swallowed eleven of his murderers. The waves becoming too high for towing the pinnace home, everything accessible was removed for the benefit of Oldham's family, and then she was set adrift. She reached the land in safety, with the two Indians in her. All the minor sachems of the Narraganset nation had been privy to this piracy and murder, but the two grand-sachems, whom Roger Williams had stimulated with six fathoms of beads, pursued and killed Adusah, the immediate assassin. His confederates escaped to the Pequods, whose league with them was one leading cause of the war which the next year annihilated that especially cruel and treacherous nation.

Jonathan Brewster terms Oldham "brother." A Thomas Oldham was at

Duxbury, 1643, and Scituate, 1650. The name was among those of Duxbury's Revolutionary soldiers; and on the monument to Plymouth's soldiers lost in the civil war, is the name of J. T. Oldham. The relationship of these to the famous John, is probable.

NOTE 3. John Gallop died at Boston, 1649, leaving 40*s.* for "the new meeting-house."* He was a Boston pilot, and probably the first professional one. His successors in that noble service are constantly reminded of him by a fine island in Boston Harbor, bearing his name. He left three sons, all seamen, and a widow. To John, Jr., he gave his shallop, and to the other sons his barque, in which their mother had a half-interest. John was killed at the Narraganset fort, 1675, while captain of a Connecticut company. He took his first lesson in war at the attack on the murderers in Oldham's pinnace, and he fell thirty-nine years later, while bravely leading his men in the battle which destroyed the nation to which those murderers had belonged.

NOTE 4. Conant's leading companions in the change from Cape Ann to Naumkeag, were John Balch, John Woodbury, and Peter Palfrey; also, William Trask, captain in the Pequod war, and John Humphrey. All except Balch became members of the legislature in the future colony of Massachusetts Bay, and all have a long line of worthy descendants, including many of eminence.

Conant's wife seems to have been with him at Cape Ann, and was probably at Plymouth. Their son, Roger, was the first-born white child of Salem. Balch, from a Somersetshire family, which dated from the Conquest, had a wife Annice, who may have come later, but they had, in 1629, at Salem, a son Benjamin (living 1706). Woodbury's wife was named Agnes, and Palfrey's, Edith.

* The "Old South."